

OBJECTIVE NECESSITY OF STUDY AND PROFESSIONAL APPROACH TO RESTORATION OF HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE ENSAMBLES IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

Major concerns for preserving the national cultural identity are timid in regards to the landscape, perhaps a lack of funding and focus on other areas of interest. Architecture has received greater concern, but even here the situation was not very happy. All the restoration / revitalization interventions are spread, there is no coherent approach to the works, based on priorities for action which result from the analysis of degradation, vulnerability, and overall value of monuments. Therefore study and research for the restoration of parks and historic gardens should be thorough, currently lacking a methodology for analysis and evaluation of historical monuments adapted to the specific landscape that is different from architectural specifics. Studies for a professional approach to historic landscape restoration assemblies could be a starting point in developing the methodology for the restoration of historic parks and gardens in Romania.

Key words: *Historical identity, cultural landmarks, restoration, the actual functionality, historical garden.*

INTRODUCTION

Keeping and preserving the cultural heritage is a necessity in the context of recognizing the historic, architectural and artistic inheritance of Romania, but also for understanding the stages of social, political and cultural development of the Romanian territories. The gardens and parks that belong to the historic edifices, as monuments of the past, represent testimonies of certain stages of civilization and culture of a people, of the way in which historical, economical, social factors as well as the beliefs, the scientific and technical knowledge of the time determined certain shapes for the space of human living.

Knowing, investigating and conserving or restoring these gardens could prove to be as important as doing so with any of the other cultural values that make up the historical heritage of a country and, in many case, on the world (Legea 451/2002).

In the case of gardens, the effect of the exterior climate conditions on the specific constructions and mostly on the vegetation, correlated with the potential life span of the botanic species,

determines the degradation over time of the general aspect of the landscape and often leads to important losses. Preserving the landscape in such cases means defending them from physical destruction, maintaining the basic, original characteristics of the shapes and the composing elements that lasted through time.

The importance given to restoration and conservation of the historical heritage of landscape architecture in different European countries reflects in putting in the general attention, inclusion in the touristic circuit, publishing of specially magazines, formation of professional associations, and especially in allocating funds and attracting sponsors for financing studies and restoration projects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In Romania there are over 29.000 historical monuments, of which over 4.000 are in a state of advanced degradation, collapse and pre-collapse.

Historical monuments, according to the definition accepted by the National Ministry of Historical Monuments and of Cultures and

Cults, and in conformity with the current laws, are estate goods, constructions and land situated on the territory of Romania, or outside the borders, properties of the Romanian state, significant for the history, culture and national and universal civilization.

All mentioned above belong to the national cultural heritage and are protected by laws specific to historical sites.

The list of the monuments is pretty vast, yet many of the aforementioned are already physically gone (like the Văcărești Estate, in Dâmbovița county), and most didn't benefit from studies or conservation and restoration interventions. The few restorations undergone lately did not make themselves remarked for professionalism.



Figure 1. Văcărești Mansion, in Văcărești, Dâmbovița county (vanished since the communist period) (Ion N.D., 2008)

A professional approach of the historical monuments, as it is viewed by the last international conventions concerning cultural heritage, landscape, monuments and sites, show the importance that these have in the cultural heritage of a community (Florence cart).

The process of professional restoration of the historical gardens involves an inventory of its comprising elements and specialized interventions considering their restoration, conservation and up-keeping, obtaining and maintaining a high degree of authenticity.



Figure 2. Image from the restoration of the Venetian terraces, done in the time of Martha Bibescu (Chiliman A., 2000)



Figure 3. Planting on the venetian terrace, at the last restoration of the parc palace Brâncovenesc in Mogoșoaia, restoration of a poor quality

The authenticity of the site refers at the flat drawing, the volume of the constituent elements as well as all the other vegetal or mineral details that it encompasses. Any attempt to conserve or restore it assumes a simultaneous intervention on all the parts of the ensemble, in order not to affect the structure of the initial composition.

Restoring and conserving the historical gardens involves not only the comprising elements but also the general context, defined by the exterior environment in which these exist. All the changes that happen in the physical environment endanger the ecological equilibrium of the site.

Intervention done on the historical monuments are made only by respecting the Agreement of the Culture and Cults Ministry; the force majeure events are an exception, but with the condition that the changes are reversible.

According to the current laws, the interventions on any historical monument are represented by all the research endeavors, construction, extension, repair, consolidation, restoration, conservation, landscape setups, as well as any other involvements that modify the aspect of the monument, including current repairs, maintenance work, exterior illumination, safety measures or decorative efforts.

In the same set of interventions done on the monument are the temporary or permanent placements of physical boundaries, protection structures, pieces of fixed furniture, advertising signs, signage or any kind of markings on the monument, movement of the entire construction, setting up means of access, pedestrian and non-pedestrian, other utilities, indicators, including the ones in the protection areas of the monument.



Figure 4. „An amusement parc” created on the spot in the honor Court of the Brâncovenesc Palace in Mogoșoaia, image which alters the character of the monument (Dobrescu E.)

All the interventions that affect the monument, other than the ones concerning changing destination, maintenance or current repairs, no matter what their source of finance and the nature of the property, are done under the inspection and control of the Culture and Cults Ministry, of the Directions for Culture, Cults and National County Cultural Heritage and of the Municipality of Bucharest.

Conservation and maintenance interventions that are permitted must respect a series of ethical principles without which the project would not be subject to a certain quality of restoration (AIC, 1976).

One of the core ethical principles is that the restorator must have the necessary qualification for conservation and restoration activities.

The conservers and restaurateurs specialized in certain sectors of activity should *limit themselves only at the activities specific* to their field of study and should not consider themselves specialists in other domains connected to their own (for example painting restorators reconstituting statues)

The quality of restorations is the defining element of a specialist, *not the quantity* or the value of the restored object.

A vast professional experience is necessary, gained through continuous formation, through collaboration with other specialists from connected domains, for a full knowledge of the qualities and abilities of a specialist in restoration works.

Maintaining a critical attitude regarding the *traditional materials and methods* used in conservation and restoration of the degraded elements is a necessity, considering that all the manufacturers promote their own materials and work methods.

Any specialist activating in this field is obliged to demonstrate a profound respect for *the aesthetic, historic and physical integrity of the restored object*.

Any investigation or treatment applied on a historical piece must be made within *the limits of the competency* of the restorator.

For each oeuvre that has a historical or artistic characteristic the specialist must use the highest and most exact *standard of treatment*. Certain opportune treatments will be preferred to others, any other type of treatment that is considered unfit for the conservation or restoration of the piece being damaging.

The materials used for restoring the monuments will have the quality of being *reversible*, so that their potential removal in the future won't affect the physical integrity of the restored *object*. The changes brought through the works of restoration must be made to the step that the original object remains recognizable.

This creates a *limitation of aesthetically reintegration*.

The quality of the restorer's labour is given by his capacity to keep up with the latest developments of the technology involved in this field. For this, the specialist is forced to

consult the *scientific novelties* and develop his aptitudes so that he can offer the best treatment in a diverse range of situations.

The responsible restorer has the obligation to coordinate the activity of the auxiliary personnel, so that the protection and integrity of the cultural good is assured. A series of actions which might degrade the site over time are forbidden. Such actions include the execution of alleys with paved concrete, any attempts to mask the lower part of the buildings, painting with synthetic substances or replacing covers. It is also forbidden to plant any large scale trees at less than 15m from the monument or the execution of burials at a distance that's less than 6m from the church walls. Depositing, even temporary, of chemical substances or flammable products, solvents or other dangerous substances inside or near the monument are sanctioned according to the local laws (Legea 41/1995; Legea 50/1991; Legea 10/1995).

Neither is depositing of construction materials, utility materials or household items near of inside the monument allowed. The change of usage for the historical monument, digging, erecting new edifices without specialist archeological assistance or executing constructions for new buildings in the functional area or the protection area of the monument also enters under the rule of law (Legea 11/1994).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

For the professional approach of the restoration process for historical gardens and parks, the specialist must also have knowledge of the Cultural heritage, the Natural Heritage and implicitly the Historical garden, how the historical monument classification works, and which are the main characteristics needed for an edifice to be declared a historical monument.

Another important issue to be aware of is the juristic regime of the monuments, what is there are of protection and what the protected area is comprised of, as well as the interventions that are permitted on a historical monument.

The Venetian Carta (1964) gave a wider interpretation to the notion of "historic monument", introducing new concepts as "historic ensemble", "monumental center",

"urban reservation", "area of cultural and natural protection" etc.

So, the notion of "historic monument" encompasses the isolated architectural creation, the urban and rural settlement, as well as the domains that surround it, parks and gardens, which, together, bring the testimony of a civilization representative of a historical period. Any historical monument has available, from its setup in the territory, a protective space, which gives its individuality among the surrounding edifices.



Figure 5. Creation of a protection zone for monuments in a rural area

The specific protection areas (established through the urbanism documentations approved by the Historical Monuments Committee), the artistically components of the areas, the comprising elements of the area and the interior and exterior furnishing elements, as they are defined by the application set of rules, are considered part of the historical monument.

The research regarding the inventory of the *landscape heritage* is an indispensable step in the restoration study, as picturing the current picture can establish the necessity and the urgency of the conservation and restoration interventions.

In this context, every historical monument must dispose of an inventory of its composing elements (done by the owner or the administrator).

This inventory is made up of:

-constructions – buildings with main functions, household side buildings, property walls, towers, living spaces, religious edifices, altars etc.;

-exterior arrangements – access roads, stairs, walk paths, roads, parks, plantations, basins, statues, lakes, exterior installations, fences;

-other elements – graveyards, archeological elements;

-mobile cultural goods;

This data is gathered in the **Analytic paper of the monument**, which also includes details regarding the official denomination, address, short description, date of construction, history and state of conservation, sketches and photos of the property, juristic regime, cadastral survey, urbanistic reglementations, building founder, prior restoration workings.

To be able to make an objective decision regarding the restoration or revitalization of a historical monument, we must know its origin, the influences that determined the choice for a certain style of architecture, the factors that contributed to its changes over time. A professional approach of restoration must lead to the establishment of the global value of the historic monument and to planning the interventions that must be done, depending of the degree of vulnerability and the historic and aesthetically importance of the composing elements.

CONCLUSIONS

The existence of many gardens in Romania, which, even though appear on the List of historical monuments, are little or not known at all, some in state of forgetfulness, pray to natural or anthropic degradation, some *arranged* through interventions unfit for their initial value, constitute a compelling argument for the professional approach of the process of restoration.

„... Through restoration we understand any intervention aimed to bring to its efficiency a product of human activity” (Brandi C., 1996).



Figure 6. The ruins of the Cantacuzino palace from Florești, jud. Prahova, foto 2007 (Dobrescu E.)



Figure 7. The Istrate Micescu mansion from Micești – jud. Argeș (Ion N.D., 2008)

Sadly, we can observe that in the very important publication that catalogues historical gardens in the world, *The Oxford Companion to gardens 2*, Romania is only mentioned a few times, for the Golescu family and baron Bruckental from Avrig gardens (page 475-476), the Brâncuși sculptural site from Tg.Jiu, informations offered by Maria Golescu in the XX century. In the same volume, Bulgaria has a 2,5 page synthesis, Hungary around 2 pages (*Oxford Companion to Gardens*, 1986).

In order to be considered a piece of art, the garden must benefit from objective recognition, it must recreate the artistic sensation every time it's visited, it must represent beauty by itself, like a painting, it must allow for “the play of imagination in contemplation”.

Any intervention done to work of art depends on this recognition by its state: “a work of art, no matter how old or classic it is, actually comes into being and not only for the potential as a work of art, when it lives in a certain individualistic experience” (Dewey, 1951).

„The restoration is the methodologic moment of recognition of the work on art in its physical consistency and in its double aesthetic polarity, that aims to transfer it in the future.” (Brandi C., 1996)

In the case of gardens which do not have a historical documentation which can certify the initial image of the monument before restoration, it can come to interpreting data from similar monuments from the same period or to an innovative or eclectic approach to the process. In this case valuable elements from a historical point of view are kept and new functions can be introduced according to the necessities of the space utilization.

The newly introduced functions must take into account the original atmosphere of the monument without altering the image as a whole.

The analysis criteria are utilized when reaching a diagnostic and constructing a plan of restoration, as a revival, as a reconstitution of the authenticity of the work of art: „Restoration, as an actualization of the work of art, is included in this filtration and accumulation of data; so it is natural to identify two stages: first, of reconstitution of the authentic text, second, of intervention upon the matter that makes up the piece” (Brandi C., 1996).

The insufficient preoccupation in the domain of restoration and revitalization of landscape monuments, the lack of specialty studies and documents of evidence, which may bring into the attention of the Culture and Cults Ministry the imperative of restoration based on scientific basis of historical parks and gardens, is the main argument for getting back the cultural and historical identity. Currently, in the archives of the Culture and Cults Ministry as well as the archives of the Town Halls that act as owners of the landscape monuments, there are no complete documents that present a clear and up to date inventory and also a timeline of prior restoration work.

All of these recordings, previous to the professional restoration process, must make up the primary data base which will enable a qualified approach in restoring the important landscape monuments from Romania

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